



Alzheimer's State Plan Commission  
**Cultural Competency Task Force**

Thursday, October 2

4:00-5:00pm

Nursing Placement, Inc.

334 East Avenue #2

Pawtucket, RI

**Attendees:**

Maria Barros (co-chair)

Jasmin Rimcon (co-chair)

Valery Lopez

Lori Brennan-Almeida

Tiffany Eduard

Marea Tumber

**Draft Minutes**

**Welcome and introductions:**

The minutes from the September meeting were approved, and are posted on the Secretary of State's Website.

Tiffany brought up "iitranslates," which is a telephone translation service provided by Dorcas International. Maria said that the state has a contract with them already, and they are very expensive. Tiffany wondered if they would be willing to provide subsidized service to lower-income people. Maria said that DOH started a certification process for medical transcription services in Spanish, and "iiTranslates" is not certified. DEA uses Horton, and Lifespan runs its own service.

**Review of the Task Force's work:**

Maria reviewed that our group is a part of the Alzheimer's State Plan. The purpose of this Task Force is to make recommendations to meet the various cultural needs of underserved RI residents impacted by Alzheimer's and other related cognitive impairments.

Maria stated that we cannot translate the MOST. Dr. Fine and Palliative Care said no because it is too expensive; they will only translate the instructions.

Also, we cannot change the MMSE mini-mental because it is copyrighted. It is available in English and Spanish only. According to Dr. Snyder, if our group were to design a new test, it would need to be reviewed by a committee and tested before practitioners would trust it.

Lori said that if she is assessing someone who is not literate, she ignores that question on the test. In those cases, the person's score is reported as 13/29, instead of 13/30, for example. Lori uses translators and finds culturally appropriate phrases; for example, having a person spell "mundo" backwards, rather than "world." Maria said that nursing homes and assisted living facilities use BIMS as a cognitive screen, or MOCA (Montreal Cognitive Assessment, <http://www.mocatest.org>)

The group feels that we need one tool that is available in multiple languages. Tiffany suggested designing a test that is visual and uses pictures, rather than words. That way, language differences would be less of a barrier to the test. Maria said that the MOCA is a more visually based assessment.

Lori said that the person giving the mini-mental needs to speak the language of the person being assessed, or have a translator available. Otherwise, they cannot understand any questions or assess whether a response is correct. Lori also said that she never does an assessment on the first visit. She gets permission to perform the assessment from the caregiver/guardian, assesses language and cultural barriers, and returns later to do the test. She prefers using a translator rather than a family member, but will use family if she needs to.

### **Survey:**

Maria and Yasmin are working on editing the survey questions. They are organizing the questions into 4 categories: demographics, socioeconomic status, health/healthcare and language/cultural barriers. Maria piloted the survey on approximately 20 caregivers. Most were, Cape Verdean patients and their family members in her care. She is going to add a question to the survey regarding whether the respondent is "self" or "caregiver." The primary place that her patients experience communication issues is at the doctor's office. Another big concern is the lack of transportation.

Lori read a letter that she received from the family of a Portuguese woman who cares for her husband with Alzheimer's. The letter elucidates how difficult it is to understand medical information in another language, and how isolating it can be to not have reading material and videos in one's native tongue. Maria does have a caregiver handbook in Portuguese, and will get a copy to Lori.

The group discussed how to produce DVDs in different languages for family and caregivers of Alzheimer's patients since many of them cannot read. The videos could

cover how to handle behavioral issues, how to speak with medical professionals, etc. DVDs. The DVDs could be shown on various TV stations that are aired in other languages.

Tiffany asked whether the new center at URI could be help with funding. Also, perhaps local students could help as a part of their senior projects.

**Next meeting:** November 6<sup>nd</sup>, 11:00am-12:00 pm